

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A surgical instrument for stabilizing and facilitating recovery of injured bone within a living body, comprising:

a flexible cable having a first end, a second end, and a length between the first and second ends sufficient to wrap around the injured bone; and

a plurality of permanent bone-contacting enlargements fixedly attached to the flexible cable between the first and second ends, the bone-contacting enlargements being spaced apart from one another to provide linking cable portions alternating with the spaced bone-contacting enlargements.

2. A surgical instrument according to claim 1, wherein the flexible cable is formed of a metal.

3. A surgical instrument according to claim 1, wherein the flexible cable is formed of a metal selected from stainless steel and cobalt chrome.

4. A surgical instrument according to claim 1, wherein the flexible cable is axially inelastic.

5. A surgical instrument according to claim 1, wherein the bone-contacting enlargements are obtuse.

6. A surgical instrument according to claim 1, wherein the bone-contacting enlargements comprise beads.

7. A surgical instrument according to claim 1, wherein the bone-contacting enlargements comprise a high molecular weight polymer.

8. A surgical instrument according to claim 1, wherein the bone-contacting obtuse enlargements comprise polyethylene.

9. A surgical instrument according to claim 1, wherein the bone-contacting enlargements comprise a metal.

10. A surgical instrument according to claim 1, wherein the bone-contacting enlargements have peripheries circumferentially surrounding the flexible cable.

11. A surgical instrument according to claim 1, wherein the bone-contacting enlargements each have a respective axial length smaller in dimension than respective axial lengths of adjacent ones of the linking cable portions.

12. A surgical instrument according to claim 1, wherein the flexible cable has an end portion free of the bone-contacting enlargements, the end portion being sufficient in length to permit engagement with a tensioning device.

13. A method for stabilizing and facilitating recovery of injured bone within a living body, said method comprising:

providing a surgical instrument comprising a flexible cable and a plurality of permanent bone-contacting enlargements, the flexible cable

having a first end, a second end, and a length sufficient to wrap around the injured bone, the bone-contacting enlargements being fixedly attached to the flexible cable between the first and second ends and being spaced apart from one another to provide linking cable portions alternating with the spaced bone-contacting enlargements;

passing the surgical instrument about the injured bone to contact the bone-contacting enlargements and the injured bone with one another, the bone-contacting enlargements positioning the linking cable portions in spaced relationship to the injured bone;

tensioning the flexible cable about a constricted region of the injured bone while the bone-contacting enlargements retain the linking cable portions in spaced relationship to the injured bone for permitting vascular communication across the constricted region of the injured bone; and

securing surgical instrument about the injured bone.

14. A method according to claim 13, wherein the flexible cable is formed of a metal.

15. A method according to claim 13, wherein the flexible cable is formed of a metal selected from stainless steel and cobalt chrome.

16. A method according to claim 13, wherein the flexible cable is axially inelastic.

17. A method according to claim 13, wherein the bone-contacting enlargements are obtuse.

18. A method according to claim 13, wherein the bone-contacting enlargements comprise beads.

19. A method according to claim 13, wherein the bone-contacting enlargements comprise a high molecular weight polymer.

20. A method according to claim 13, wherein the bone-contacting obtuse enlargements comprise polyethylene.

21. A method according to claim 13, wherein the bone-contacting enlargements comprise a metal.

22. A method according to claim 13, wherein the bone-contacting enlargements have peripheries circumferentially surrounding the flexible cable.

23. A method according to claim 13, wherein the bone-contacting enlargements each have a respective axial length smaller in dimension than respective axial lengths of adjacent ones of the linking cable portions.